

This summary is provided as an overview of the proposed action (proposed project) and its consequence pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Included in this section is a brief summary of the project, project alternatives, potential areas of controversy, significant effects, and proposed mitigation strategies. For additional detail regarding specific issues, please consult the appropriate Sections of Chapter 3.0 (Sections 3.1 through 3.11).

S.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) provides, to the greatest extent possible, an analysis of the potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of the project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and San Luis Obispo County's local guidelines.

S.2 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The San Luis Obispo County General Plan consists of 14 elements including seven state-mandated elements: Land Use, Conservation, Noise, Circulation, Open Space, Safety and Housing and seven optional elements: Recreation, Historic and Esthetic, Energy, , Economic and Agriculture. The distribution of information makes the General Plan difficult to use. In addition, several elements were adopted more than 20 years ago which means they have not reflected current conditions, or the County's vision.

In 2006, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors directed staff to consolidate and update the current adopted General Plan by preparing a Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE). The COSE would improve the usability and effectiveness of the General Plan document by consolidating various elements of the adopted General Plan and incorporating additional smart growth principles and resource-based policies.

The proposed project is the adoption and subsequent implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update. The proposed COSE unites five elements of the existing General Plan and incorporates timely and effective conservation strategies. The consolidated elements include three elements (Conservation, Historic, and Esthetic) of the 1974 Environment Plan, the 1994 Energy Element, and the 1998 Open Space Element (extracted from the Agriculture and Open Space Element).

The goals, policies and programs of the COSE, through design, are intended to reduce environmental impacts and thus serve as the project's "mitigation measures" for the purposes of CEQA review. Throughout the EIR, the mitigation section refers back to the policies and programs of the COSE.

This EIR provides the environmental information and analysis and primary CEQA documentation necessary to adequately consider the effects of implementation of the COSE Consolidation and Update. The County of San Luis Obispo, as lead agency, has approval authority and responsibility for considering the environmental effects of the whole of the project.

S.3 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

The EIR analysis completed for the COSE Consolidation and Update has determined that there are no significant impacts associated with the project. In fact, in many cases, implementation of the proposed policies would result in a **Class IV, beneficial impact**.

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Therefore, there are no alternatives that meet the CEQA rule of reason for an alternative; specifically, limiting the selection of alternatives “to ones capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project.”

A number of alternatives were considered but were not selected for further evaluation in this EIR because they were determined to be infeasible, would not attain the basic objectives of the project or would not avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant effects. The alternatives considered but not selected include the following:

- Off-Site Alternative
- Reorganization of Policies Only (No Update to Policies)
- Update of Conservation and Open Space Elements Only (No Reorganization of Policies)
- Less (or More) Conservation Oriented Policies

As required by CEQA, the EIR evaluated a “No Project Alternative.” Under the No Project Alternative, no update or consolidation of the COSE would occur. The County would rely on conservation and open space policies in the adopted General Plan, which have been identified as outdated, difficult to find and use, inconsistent with community needs and issues, and lacking innovative natural resource conservation, open space preservation, and climate protection measures. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would not meet the basic objectives of the project; it is inferior to the proposed project.

S.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15123(b) (1) provides that the summary shall identify each significant effect with proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect. This information is summarized in **Table S-1**. The significance of each impact is also shown, both before and after implementation of mitigation as follows:

- **Class I. Significant and Unavoidable:** An impact that cannot be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires a Statement of Overriding Considerations to be issued if the project is approved per §15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.
- **Class II. Significant but Mitigable:** An impact that can be reduced to below the threshold level given reasonably available and feasible mitigation measures. Such an impact requires findings to be made under §15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines.
- **Class III. Not Significant:** An impact that may be adverse, but does not exceed the threshold levels and does not require mitigation measures. However, mitigation measures that could further lessen the environmental effect may be suggested if readily available and easily achievable.
- **Class IV. Beneficial:** An effect that would reduce existing environmental problems or hazards.

Levels of significance are determined by comparing the impact to thresholds of significance as described under each environmental issue area in **Section 3.0** of this document. Refer to **Section 3.11** of this EIR for a discussion of additional effects found not to be significant (no impact).

TABLE S-1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS

Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Aesthetics / Visual Resources				
Impact-3.1-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's scenic resources by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Goal VR1, Policy VR 1.1 Goal VR 2, Policies VR 2.1 through VR 2.3 Goal VR3, Policies VR 3.1 through VR 3.5 Goal VR4, Policies VR 4.1 through VR 4.5 Goal VR5. Policies VR 5.1 through 5.3	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Agricultural Resources				
Impact-3.2-1 Adoption of scenic protection standards, identification of community separators, and designation of scenic corridors consistent with the COSE Consolidation and Update would enact policies and programs that directly and indirectly influence agricultural operations. However, goals, policies, and programs contained in the proposed COSE are consistent with agricultural protection policies contained in the Agricultural Element and other existing preservation documents, and reiterates that any proposed regulations will not restrict or interfere with private property or agricultural operations.	Policy VR 1.2, Implementation Strategy 1.2.3 Policy VR 3.1, Implementation Strategy VR 3.1.1 (b) Policy VR 4.1, Implementation Strategy VR 4.1.2	Class III, Not Significant Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Impact

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Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Air Quality				
Impact 3.3-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would formalize new policies that would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable 2001 CAP, as it would not result in additional growth beyond what is already planned for in the General Plan. Rather, these policies would help reduce projected emissions of ozone precursors ROG and NOx that were addressed in the 2001 CAP.	Policies AQ 1.1 to AQ1.3, AQ 1.6, AQ 2.2, and AQ 3.1	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.3-2 The proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would not result in any further exceedances of State AAQS or contribute substantially to projected violations of federal 8-hour ozone or localized CO or PM10 standards. Rather, the COSE would implement policies that would help reduce the potential for future exceedances of State and federal standards for regional and localized pollutants.	Policy AQ 3.2, Implementation Strategy AQ 3.2.1 Policy AQ 3.8	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.3-3 The proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would not result in any net increase of ROG or NOx emissions that are precursors to ozone. Instead, the COSE Consolidation and Update would implement policies that would help reduce ROG and NOx emissions, particularly from motor vehicles, and actually reduce emissions assumed from the current General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element.	Policies AQ 1.1 through AQ 1.6 Policies AQ 2.1 through AQ 2.6	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.3-4 Implementation of the proposed COSE update would promote land use strategies that reduce the potential to expose sensitive receptors to unhealthful concentrations of localized pollutants CO, PM10, and PM2.5.	Policy AQ 3.6, Implementation Strategy AQ 3.61	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact

Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Biological and Natural Resources				
Impact-3.4-1 Implementation of the proposed Conservation and Open Space Element would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's species and habitat by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Goal BR1, Policies BR 1.1 through BR 1.16 Goal BR2, Policies Br 2.1 through BR 2.11 Goal BR 3, Policies BR 3.1 through Br3.5 Goal BR4, Policies BR 4.1 through BR 4.10 Goal BR5, Policies BR 5.1 through BR 5.4 Goal BR6, Policy BR 6.1 Goal BR7, Policies BR 7.1 through 7.7	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Cultural and Paleontological Resources				
Impact-3.5-1 Implementation of the proposed Conservation and Open Space Element would add greater protection and preservation of San Luis Obispo County's cultural and historic resources by requiring cultural education, outreach, acquisition, preservation and protection measures consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Goal CR 1, Policy CR 1.1, Implementation strategies: CR 1.1.1 through CR 1.1.3 Goal CR 2, Policy CR 2.1 Goal CR 3, Policies CR 3.1through CR 3.3 Goal CR 4, Policies CR 4.1 through CR 4.6	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Geology and Soils				
Impact-3.6-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would provide greater conservation and protection the county's important soils by requiring land use restrictions, guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Goal SL 1, Policies SL 1.1 through SL 1.2 Goal SL 2, Policies SL 2.1 through SL 2.3	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact

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Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Hydrology and Water Quality				
Impact 3.7-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would improve San Luis Obispo County's water quality by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Policy WR 1.11, Implementation Strategies WR 1.11.1 to 1.11.2 Policy WR 2.1, Implementation Strategies WR 2.1.1 to WR 2.1.3 Policies WR 3.1, Implementation Strategies WR 3.1.1 to 3.1.4 Policy WR 3.2, Implementation Strategy WR 3.2.1 Policy WR 3.3, Implementation Strategies WR3.3.1 to 3.3.4 Policy WR 3.4 Policies WR 3.7, Implementation Strategies WR 3.7.1 to 3.7.2	Class IV , Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.7-2 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update does not accommodate for any additional population growth (and therefore groundwater demand and extraction) than is anticipated in the County's adopted General Plan. Implementation of the proposed policies would actually serve to reduce the demand on groundwater (and potential loss of flow to surface water) by requiring additional water resource and conservation plans, programs, and policies than are currently adopted by the County.	Policy WR 1.3 Policy WR 1.11 Policy WR 2.4 Policy WR 3.2, Implementation Strategy WR 3.2.1 Policy WR 3.3, Implementation Strategies WR 3.3.1 to 3.3.4 Policy WR 4.1 Policy WR 4.5 Policy WR 5.6	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.7-3 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update would add greater from flooding by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, and discretionary project review consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Policy WR 6.1 Policy WR 6.2 Policy WR 6.3 Policy WR 6.4 Policy WR 6.5 Policy WR 6.6 Policy WR 6.7 Policy WR 6.8	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact

Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Land Use and Planning				
Impact-3.8-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update will result in better organization, identification and implementation of relevant conservation and open space policies consistent with, and inclusive of, the General Plan, individual Area Plans, Strategic Growth Principles, and new (or anticipated) state requirements. As the proposed Update and Consolidation serves to <i>reduce</i> conflicts with applicable plans and policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.	Implementation Strategies OS 1.4.4, 1.4.5, 1.5.1, and 4.11.1- 5 Implementation Strategy OS 1.6.1 Implementation Strategy OS 1.7.1 Implementation Strategy OS 1.8.1	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Public Services and Utilities				
Impact 3.9-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update does not accommodate for any additional population growth (and therefore water demand) than is anticipated in the County's adopted General Plan. Implementation of the proposed policies would actually serve to increase water supply and reduce water demand by requiring additional water resource and conservation plans, programs, and policies than are currently adopted by the County.	Policy WR 4.1 Policy WR 3.3, Implementation Strategies WR 3.3.1 to 3.3.4 Policy WR 2.4 Policy WR 1.13 Policy WR 1.11 Policy WR 1.3 Policy WR 1.2, Implementation Strategies WR 1.2.1 to 1.2.3	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Impact 3.9-2 As discussed under Impact 3.9-1 above, implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update does not accommodate for any additional population growth (and therefore water demand or wastewater capacity) than is anticipated in the County's adopted General Plan. Although policies within the COSE direct growth towards urban areas, the overall strategies to increase availability and reduce demand for water resources serve to offset any potential increase in infrastructure demand in urban areas. This is considered a Class III, not significant impact .	Policy WR 1.2, Implementation Strategies WR 1.2.1 to 1.2.3 Policy WR 1.3 Policy WR 1.11 Policy WR 1.13 Policy WR 2.4 Policy WR 3.3, Implementation Strategies WR 3.3.1 to 3.3.4 Policy WR 4.1	Class III, Not Significant Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Impact

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Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Impact 3.9-3 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update does not accommodate for any additional population growth (and therefore Solid Waste Service and Disposal) than is anticipated in the County's adopted General Plan. Implementation of the proposed policies would actually serve reduce waste and associated disposal needs by requiring additional recycling, waste diversion and reuse plans, programs and policies than are currently adopted by the County.	Policy E 5.1, Implementation Strategies E 5.1.1 to 5.1.4 Policy E 5.2, Implementation Strategies E 5.2.1 to 5.2.2 Policy E 5.3, Implementation Strategy E 5.3.1	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Traffic and Circulation				
Impact 3.10-1 Implementation of the proposed COSE Consolidation and Update will reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improving transportation efficiency (thus improving level of service) and increase alternative transportation use by requiring land use restrictions, design guidelines, discretionary project review and program/policy coordination consistent with, and more stringent than, plans programs and policies currently adopted by the County.	Policy AQ 1.2, Implementation Strategy AQ 1.2.1 Policy AQ 1.3, Implementation Strategy AQ 1.3.1 Policy AQ 1.4 Policy AQ 1.5 Implementation Strategies AQ 1.5.1to 1.5.4 Policy AQ 1.6, Implementation Strategies AQ 1.6.1 to 1.6.4 Policy AQ 1.7, Implementation Strategies AQ 1.7.1 to 1.7.2 Policy AQ 2.1, Implementation Strategies AQ 2.1.1 to 2.1.2 Policy AQ 2.2, Implementation Strategies AQ 2.2.1 to 2.2.4	Class IV, Beneficial Impact	None Required	Class IV , Beneficial Impact
Cumulative Impacts				
Aesthetics / Visual Resources				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact

Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Agricultural Resources				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Air Quality				
Impact X.X-X The proposed COSE update would help implement the County's Strategic Growth Principles, energy efficiency measures, and other strategies that would help reduce GHG emissions from transportation, energy, and other source categories over time. When coupled with technology-forcing regulations (e.g., low-carbon fuels, motor vehicle engine emission standards), this would help reduce the county's carbon-based GHG emissions when compared to the existing General Plan's provisions and is consistent with AB 32's goal of reducing 2020 greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels.	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Impact X.X-X While the COSE helps implement the County's Strategic Growth Principles that could shift more growth away from sprawling development patterns toward urbanized areas with better transportation infrastructure, it would not increase the exposure of the public to significant risks associated with sea level rise or other potential effects of global climate change on San Luis Obispo County.	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.)	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Biological and Natural Resources				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III , Not Significant Cumulative Impact

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Impact	Identified General Plan Goals, Policies and Action Items that Reduce Potential Impacts	Level of Significance Without Mitigation Measures	Mitigation Measure	Resulting Level of Significance
Cultural and Paleontological Resources				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Geology and Soils				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Hydrology and Water Quality				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Land Use and Planning				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Public Services and Utilities				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact
Traffic and Circulation				
	Policies that mitigate cumulative impacts would be the same as those under the individual impacts category (see above). No additional policy/mitigation is required.	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact	None Required	Class III, Not Significant Cumulative Impact